hee seekes my life, his reason well *I* know;
I oft deliuerd from his forfeytures
many that haue at times made mone to me,
therefore he hates me.

Sal. I am sure the Duke will neuer grant
this forfaiture to hold.

An. The Duke cannot denie the course of law:
for the commoditie that strangers haue
vvith vs in Venice, if it be denyed,
will much impeach the iustice of the state, *his*
since that the trade and profit of the citty
consisteth of all Nations. Therefore goe,
these griefes and losses haue so bated me,
that *I* shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
to morrow, to my bloody Creditor.
Well *Iaylor* on, pray God *Bassanio* come
to see me pay his debt, and then *I* care not. *Exeunt.*

Enter *Portia, Nerrissa, Lorenzo, Iessica,* and a man of *Portias.*

Lor. Maddam, although I speake it in your presence,
you haue a noble and a true conceite
of god-like amitie, which appeares most strongly,
in bearing thus the absence of your Lord.
But if you knew to whom you show this honour,
how true a gentleman you send releefe,
how deere a louer of my Lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the worke,
then customarie bountie can enforce you.

Por. I neuer did repent for dooing good,
nor shall not now: for in companions
that doe conuerse and wast the time together,
vvhose soules doe beare an egall yoke of loue, *equal*
there must be needes a like proportion
of lyniaments, of manners, and of spirit;
vvhich makes me thinke, that this *Anthonio*
(beeing the bosome louer of my Lord,)
must needes be like my Lord. If it be so,

how

How little is the cost I haue bestowed
in purchasing the semblance of my soule;
From out the state of hellish cruelty, *misary.*
This comes too neere the praising of my selfe,
Therefore no more of it: heere other things
Lorenso I commit into your hands,
The husbandry and mannage of my house,
Vntill my Lords returne: for mine owne part,
I haue toward heauen breath'd a secret vowe,
To liue in prayer and contemplation,
Onely attended by *Nerrissa* heere,
Vntill her husband, and my Lords returne,
There is a Monastry two miles off,
And there we will abide. I doe desire you, *will we*
not to denie this imposition,
the which my loue, and some necessity
now layes vpon you.

Lorens. Madame, with all my hart,
I shall obey you in all faire commaunds.

Por. My people doe already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and *Iessica,*
in place of Lord *Bassanio* and my selfe.
So far you well till we shall meete againe.

Lor. Faire thoughts and happy houres attend on you.

Iessi. *I* wish your Ladiship all hearts content.

Por. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleasd
farewell to wish it back on you: far you well *Iessica.* *Exeunt.*
Now *Balthaser,* as I haue euer found thee honest true,
So let me find thee still: take this same letter,
and vse thou all th'indeuour of a man,
In speede to Mantua, see thou render this
Cosins into my cosin hands, Doctor *Belario,*
And looke what notes and garments he doth giue thee,
bring them *I* pray thee with imagin'd speede
vnto the Traiect, to the common Ferrie
vvhich trades to Venice; vvast no time in words,
but get thee gone, I shall be there before thee.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE *Merchant of Venice* (STC 22296) LONDON, 1600 NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND (Bute.494) Octavo